

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3459

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 323

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, QA

SUBJECT: GOQ DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS DISCUSSES
LABOR ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN MIDDLE EAST

USINT BAGHDAD INFO VIA POUCH

1. SUMMARY: E/C OFFICER MET MORNING OF 6 MARCH WITH MR. SHEHATA MOUSSA, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS IN MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS. DURING COURSE OF INTERVIEW, MOUSSA EXPRESSED OPINIONS ON THREE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE STATED THAT ILO IS A GOOD FORUM BUT NOT LIKELY TO SOLVE MAJOR PROBLEMS BECAUSE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN TOO POLITICIZED. THE ALO, HE SAID, HAS SHOWN THIS YEAR THAT IT CAN NO LONGER FUNCTION EVEN AS A FORUM. ITS PRE-ILO STRATEGY MEETING HAD TO BE POSTPONED, MOUSSA SAID, BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING ON WHICH MEMBERS COULD AGREE. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD LITTLE DOUBT BUT THAT THE POSTPONEMENT WOULD BE EXTENDED UNTIL IT BECAME A CANCELLATION OF THIS YEAR'S MEETING. ICATU, ACCORDING TO MOUSSA, IS DOMINATED BY LEFTISTS AND COMMUNISTS WHO CAN AGREE ON
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NEITHER STRATEGY NOR TACTICS. HE EXPRESSED HIS AND HIS GOVERNMENTS' VIEWS OF THE DISARRAY WHICH CHARACTERIZED LATEST ICATU MEETING. (QATAR IS NOT REPRESENTED IN ICATU,) MR. MOUSSA'S THOUGHTS ON SPECIFIC SUBJECTS ARE CONTAINED IN THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS. END SUMMARY.

2. MOST IMPORTANT IN MOUSSA'S MIND IS THE EFFECT U.S. ABSENCE

WILL HAVE ON ILO. THESE EFFECTS WILL, HE FEELS, BE FELT AS AN INEVITABLE SHIFT TO THE LEFT AS ILO FINDS NEW CENTER OF GRAVITY. HE SAID THAT QATAR AND OTHER THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY NOTICED THE VACUUM CAUSED BY THE DEPARTURE FROM THE ILO OF THE US TO WHICH THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES LOOKED AS A MODEL OF HOW GOVERNMENT, LABOR AND MANAGEMENT COULD WORK TOGETHER. ACCORDING TO MOUSSA, THE US LEFT ILO BECAUSE THE POLITICAL BALANCE SHIFTED AND NOT BECAUSE OF THE INJECTION OF POLITICAL ISSUES. HE STATED HIS OPINION THAT THE ILO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND THAT U.S. OBJECTIONS WERE VOICED ONLY AFTER IT LOST POWER TO CONTROL RESOLUTION OF POLITICAL ISSUES. MOUSSA SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT ALSO WOULD RATHER NOT HAVE POLITICAL ISSUES INTRUDE BUT THAT QATAR, AT LEAST, WAS MATURE ENOUGH TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT IT CANNOT ALWAYS HAVE ITS OWN WAY. ACCORDING TO MOUSSA, QATAR WOULD NEVER QUIT AN ORGANIZATION "LIKE A SPOILED CHILD."

3. THE ALO, ACCORDING TO MOUSSA, HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO AGREE EVEN TO SUCH BASIC POINTS AS WHEN AND WHERE TO MEET. HE CONCEDED THAT THIS WAS A SYMPTOM OF GENERAL DISARRAY CAUSED BY "LEFTISTS" IN AFTERMATH OF SADAT INITIATIVE. MOUSSA DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ALO WILL BE ABLE TO AGREE TO MEET PRIOR TO THE JUNE ILO MEETING AND THAT, THEREFORE, ALO WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SERVE A NUCLEUS FOR ARAB JOINT POSITION. ALO, HE SAYS, IS FACING SAME PROBLEM AS ILO -- THE PROLIFERATION OF POLITICAL ISSUES. MEETINGS OF LABOR MINISTERS WILL GO SOME WAY TO COMPENSATE FOR LACK OF ALO STRATEGY
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SESSION PRIOR TO JUNE ILO MEETING BUT, ACCORDING TO MOUSSA, ARAB POWER IN ILO WILL BE DIMINISHED AS WILL G77 POWER BY LACK OF COORDINATION AMONG ARAB STATES AND BETWEEN ARAB AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

4. MR. MOUSSA SAID THAT THE CONFUSION AND FINAL BREAKUP OF THE ICATU MEETING WAS NOT WELCOMED BY GOQ. HE THEN WENT ON TO GLEEFULLY DESCRIBE THE BREAKUP AND THE EFFECTS IT WOULD HAVE ON THE UNIONS. MOUSSA FINALLY CONCEDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS NOT UNDULY DISTRESSED BY THE PROBLEMS OF ICATU. HE SAID THAT INJECTION OF POLITICAL ISSUES WAS AGAIN THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM BUT THAT NO MEMBER OF ANY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD EXPECT SUCH AN ORGANIZATION TO BE CONCERNED WITH OTHER THAN POLITICAL ISSUES.

5. MOUSSA STATED THAT THE U.S. "POLICY OF LINKAGE" (HIS WORDS) IS BASED ON THE PREMISE OF INJECTING POLITICAL QUESTIONS INTO NON-POLITICAL MILIEUX AND THAT, WHILE GOQ COULD NOT FAULT THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF USG IN MAKING LINKAGES, IT MADE USG OBJECTIONS TO OTHER COUNTRIES' AND OTHER GROUPS' ACTING ON THE SAME PREMISE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

6. COMMENT: GOQ POLICY, AS STATED BY MR. MOUSSA, IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE INJECTION OF POLITICAL ISSUES INTO THE DELIBERATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OF THEIR AGENCIES MAKES THE WORK OF SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND AT TIMES IMPOSSIBLE. ON THE OTHERHAND, GOQ DECLARED POLICY (AS EXPRESSED BY MR. MOUSSA ON THIS OCCASION AND EARLIER, IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE JUNE 1977 ILO MEETING, BY MINISTER OF LABOR, ALI AHMED AL-ANSARI) IS TO ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH SUCH PROBLEMS AS THEY EMERGE RATHER THAN TO TRY TO REMOVE THEM FROM CONSIDERATION. IF, IN GOQ VIEW, AN ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH EMERGING POLITICAL DISPUTES, THEN THAT ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY SHOULD BE CHANGED (EITHER BY CONSTITUTIONAL OR EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS) OR SHOULD BE REPLACED BY A BETTER AGENCY. GOQ, ACCORDING TO MR. MOUSSA, WOULD NEVER AGREE THAT ANY MEMBER WOULD

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BE TAKING THE PROPER COURSE OF ACTION IN LEAVING AN ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY. ACCORDING TO MR. MOUSSA, THE U.S. THREAT TO LEAVE THE ILO WAS A LEGITIMATE TACTICAL MOVE BUT LEAVING THE ILO WHEN THE THREAT FAILED TO HAVE ITS DESIRED EFFECT WAS A STRATEGIC ERROR WHICH CAN ONLY LEAD TO FUTURE PROBLEMS FOR THE U.S. AND LOSS OF U.S. PRESTIGE. IF MR. MOUSSA'S FEELINGS ARE ANY INDICATION OF THE FEELINGS OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WE WOULD HAVE TO AGREE WITH, AT LEAST, THE SECOND PART OF THIS ASSESSMENT.

KILLGORE

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